



Ontario's Wine Authority Designates Sub-Appellations within the Niagara Peninsula

Dec. 6, 2005, Toronto, Ontario – Consumers who are interested in wine origin and terroir will now be able to find more specific information on Ontario wine labels thanks to a new regulation which designates 12 sub-appellations within the grape growing region of the Niagara Peninsula. Appellations are defined as grape growing areas that are unique because of their soil, climate and topography and contribute special character to wines made from grapes grown in each area.

This move will give official status to these regions under Ontario's VQA legislation and allow vintners who make VQA wines to use the terms on wine labels. The new regulation follows a 3-year research project to define unique geographical areas and extensive consultations within the wine industry.

New appellations and sub-appellations continue to be defined throughout the wine world, especially in the new world regions where interest in terroir is increasing.

“Our local winemakers compete with the finest regions in the world and now they will be able to further develop specific Ontario appellations” said Gerry Phillips, Minister of Government Services, the provincial ministry responsible for beverage alcohol regulation. “This change updates the rules covering what can appear on the label with respect to these places of origin.”

“Consumers have become increasingly focused on wine origin and terroir and regulating these terms will bring improved label integrity to claims of origin” said Greg Berti, President and Chair of VQA Ontario. “We also recognize that wine enthusiasts appreciate the nuances that each appellation brings to the finished wine and want more information about premium wines. We hope these new sub-appellations will allow consumers to explore the differences between growing regions and appreciate the wine styles Niagara has to offer”.

The new sub-appellations are:

Niagara Lakeshore
Niagara River
Four Mile Creek
St. David's Bench
Creek Shores
Lincoln Lakeshore
Beamsville Bench
Twenty Mile Bench
Short Hills Bench

Vinemount Ridge

In order to bear these appellation names on a label, the wine must be made from 100% grapes grown in the stated appellation and meet all applicable VQA quality standards. In addition, two broader regions are created:

Niagara on the Lake – all land within Niagara Lakeshore, Niagara River, Four Mile Creek and St. David's Bench

Niagara Escarpment – all land within Beamsville Bench, Twenty Mile Bench and Short Hills Bench

It is expected that the introduction of sub-appellation wines to the marketplace will be gradual as individual wineries determine whether they choose to use these new designations.

VQA Ontario is an independent regulatory authority that has been delegated the responsibility for administering the *Vintners Quality Alliance Act, 1999* by the Ontario government.

VQA Ontario establishes, monitors and enforces a system of quality standards and verification of product origin for Ontario wines. Only those wines made from 100% Ontario grown grapes, and approved by VQA Ontario may use appellation terms and descriptions. These include geographical terms such as "Niagara Peninsula", "Pelee Island", "Lake Erie North Shore", and "Estate Bottled" as well as terms that are linked to regulated production processes such as "Icewine" and of course, the term "VQA."

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